



Amistad National Recreation Area

Dear Friends,

As most of you know, we have been working on a general management plan (GMP) for Amistad National Recreation Area (NRA). This plan will describe a vision for the park's future and define the general framework to guide long-term park management decision-making. This framework for management decisions is the tool to help us achieve that future vision.

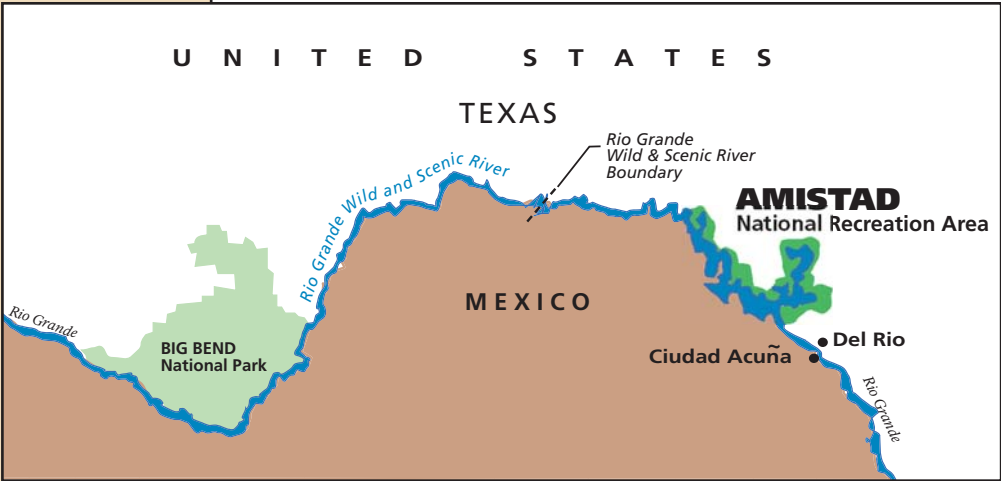
With your help, we are now much closer to realizing that vision. Using the many ideas, comments, and concerns that you expressed in response to our first newsletter, combined with input from National Park Service (NPS) staff and other federal, state, and local agencies, we have developed a preliminary alternative vision of the future for Amistad NRA. This newsletter describes this alternative vision and summarizes the existing management strategy. Based on your response to this alternative management strategy, the planning team will move ahead with the development of the draft GMP for the park.

We believe that the preferred management alternative described in this newsletter incorporates all the ideas expressed for the park's future and addresses the comments and concerns regarding the issues we must deal with in order to realize that future. We are confident that this alternative establishes a comprehensive, achievable, sustainable course of action for the future of Amistad NRA.

We look forward to your input. Please use the enclosed postage-paid feedback form to share your thoughts with us. Thank you in advance for your continued input and assistance in the development of the park's general management plan.

Sincerely,

Alan W. Cox
Superintendent
Amistad National Recreation Area





Park Mission Statement

The National Park Service (NPS) is committed to protecting the scenic, scientific, cultural, and other values that contribute to the public enjoyment of lands and waters at Amistad National Recreation Area. We are dedicated to conserving unimpaired Amistad's natural and cultural resources and values for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.



Park Mission Goals

Natural and cultural resources and associated values are protected, restored, and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader ecosystem and cultural contexts; management decisions about resources and visitors are based on adequate scholarly and scientific information.

Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities; park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the significance of the park they are visiting.

The National Park Service uses current management practices, systems, and technologies to accomplish its mission; the National Park Service increases its managerial capabilities through initiatives and support from other agencies, organizations, and individuals.



Primary Interpretive Themes

- Amistad NRA offers diverse water-based recreational opportunities, including fishing, swimming, waterskiing, and diving. Recreation access is dependent on water level, which is dependent on water management policies of other agencies and regional hydrology, geology, and climate. Recreation is incidental to the main purposes of the reservoir; Amistad Dam was constructed for water storage and flood control.
- Amistad NRA is in a transition zone of three major biotic communities — the Chihuahuan desert to the west, Balconian to the northeast, and the Tamaulipan scrub to the southeast. Amistad NRA hosts many neotropical migrant species, including birds, bats, and monarch butterflies. Other species reach their latitudinal and longitudinal limits in the Amistad area.
- Archeological remains in the Amistad NRA area represent long periods of human presence. The most spectacular evidence Amistad NRA interprets is exceptional examples of Native American rock art. Large polychrome and monochrome pictographs adorn the walls of rock shelters around the reservoir. A nearly complete range of regional styles from very old prehistoric through historic styles complement the other tangible archeological remains found in the area.
- Amistad NRA manages and protects the third largest museum collection in the national park system.
- Amistad NRA represents an excellent example of the Texas/Mexico borderlands cultural area. Frequent cultural, social, and commercial exchanges cross the political border, and Spanish continues to remain a vital part of communication.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

To begin the general management planning process, the planning team and park staff confirmed the purpose and significance of Amistad National Recreation Area and identified current issues confronting the park. The planning team also consulted other federal, state, and local government agencies and organizations to inform them of the planning process and solicit their input on the future of Amistad NRA. Next, through our previous newsletter and in a series of public meetings, we solicited comments on peoples' visions for the future of Amistad NRA, the opportunities they wished to see explored during planning, and any concerns they might have about the future management of Amistad NRA. The findings of previous planning and policy documents, such as the 1999 *General Management Plan Amendment* for development of visitor use facilities in the Rio Grande-Box Canyon section of the park, and the Amistad NRA special park uses policy for fishing tournaments, were also considered. The management actions presented in this newsletter are the result of that process to this point.

Summary of Public Comments

The input we received during the first public comment period confirmed what we had already concluded from our internal scoping process; Amistad NRA is a special place that deserves greater recognition as a unit of the national park system. Your comments told us that visitors enjoy Amistad NRA's diverse recreational and educational resources. Many comments identified legitimate issues and concerns related to access, facilities, recreational activities, and resource protection. Many other comments focused on the park's great potential and the need to protect it for the future. Still others suggested even more ambitious educational and interpretive programs and a greatly expanded and diversified range of recreational opportunities. The overall message was loud and clear — Amistad NRA is a great place and we are incorporating your suggestions for making it even better.

Management Zones-What Are They?

The management zone concept is outlined in Director's Order 2 (DO-2), the planning guideline for units of the national park system. Under DO-2, management zones prescribe desired future resource conditions, visitor experiences, and appropriate facilities and activities for areas within the park. They help define the resource conditions and visitor experiences we wish to achieve and maintain at the park for the future. The zones also establish the kinds and levels of visitor use, management activities, and development that are appropriate for maintaining these future resource conditions.

The proposed management zones for Amistad National Recreation Area were based on the Water Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (WROS) developed under an initiative funded by the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation. The WROS team, which included Amistad NRA management and staff, developed the zones for Lake Amistad. By employing the WROS inventory protocol, the team identified the physical, social, and management attributes for the entire surface area of the lake. This analysis was based on maps, aerial photographs, GIS data, and information collected in field inventories.

The zones proposed for the lake under WROS were modified to fit the criteria for management zoning in DO-2. These modified zones will be applied to the lake and upland portions of the park to create a distinct management alternative from the current management conditions at Amistad NRA. The management zones will not be applied to the park under the no-action alternative. See the following tables for a description of the management zones.

UPLAND MANAGEMENT ZONES

Concept	Resource Conditions	Visitor Experience	Appropriate Facilities and Activities
Rural Developed	Significant or sensitive cultural and natural resources would be protected to minimize impacts Natural environment would be highly modified to accommodate visitor activities and facility development	High potential for contact with other visitors High potential for contact with park staff Would be able to choose from a array of recreational activities Could anticipate a safe and controlled recreational environment Opportunities to learn about the park’s natural and cultural resources	Visitor contact facilities Hardened campground sites Parking for cars, boat trailers, recreational vehicles Park staff housing Camping, picnicking
Rural Natural	The integrity of cultural and natural resources in this area would be maintained, rehabilitated, or restored Facilities would be located whenever possible in previously disturbed areas Natural resources in this area may be modified to accommodate visitor activity and facilities with minimal impact on resources	Contact with other individuals or groups of visitors should be expected Visitors would have occasional contacts with park staff There would be opportunities to learn about the park’s cultural and natural resources	Campground sites Parking for cars, boat trailers, and recreational vehicles Camping, fishing, hunting Horseback riding
Semiprimitive	Naturally functioning ecosystem components and processes would be evident in this zone The integrity of natural and cultural resources would be monitored, protected, and preserved	Visitors would have the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate a more natural ecosystem with little discernible human imprint Visitors would find challenge and adventure in this zone Self-reliance would be important There would be some opportunities for solitude There would be a low probability of encountering park staff or other visitors	Limited visitor facilities such as information stations that are unobtrusive and blend with the environment could be developed Resource-based recreational activities such as nature viewing and backcountry camping would predominate Self-guided interpretive programs Horseback riding
Primitive	Ecosystem components and processes would be completely naturally functioning in this zone The integrity of natural and cultural resources would be monitored, protected, and preserved	The opportunity to enjoy and appreciate a natural ecosystem with little discernible human imprint Visitors would find a high potential for challenge, risk, and adventure in this zone Self-reliance would be essential There would be numerous opportunities for solitude There would be a very low probability of encountering park staff or other visitors	Minimal visitor facilities necessary for resource protection and visitor safety would be developed Resource-based recreational activities such as nature viewing and backcountry camping would predominate Self-guided interpretive programs
Pecos Culture Zone	Cultural resources would be the focus of this zone and would exhibit a high degree of integrity; management would emphasize a high level of protection and preservation Native plant and other resources would be managed to reflect the environment as it appeared before the construction of the dam and reservoir	Visitors in this zone would have opportunities to learn about and gain a deeper appreciation for the extraordinary graphic and archeological resources of the Lower Pecos River culture There would be a medium to high probability of encountering park staff or other visitors Visitors could learn about this culture in staff-guided groups or explore on their own or in small groups guided by park informational packets and interpretive media	Visitor information and interpretation facilities such as signs, panels, and displays; trails; and rest areas could be installed Guided and self-directed activities would focus on learning about and gaining a deeper appreciation of the Lower Pecos culture

LAKE MANAGEMENT ZONES

Concept	Resource Conditions	Visitor Experience	Appropriate Facilities and Activities
Rural Developed	Significant or sensitive cultural and natural resources would be protected to minimize impacts Natural environment would be highly modified to accommodate visitor activities and facility development	High potential for contact with park staff and other visitors Would encounter a park-like setting Would be able to choose from a diverse array of recreational activities Could anticipate a safe and controlled recreational environment Opportunities to learn about the park’s natural and cultural resources	Visitor contact facilities Boat launch sites Marinas Boat docks Boat fuel facilities Boating, fishing, waterskiing, swimming Fish-cleaning stations Houseboating
Rural Natural	The integrity of cultural and natural resources in this area would be maintained, rehabilitated, or restored Facilities would be located whenever possible in previously disturbed areas Natural resources in this area may be modified to accommodate visitor activities and facilities with minimal impact on resources	Contact with other individual or groups of visitors should be expected Visitors would have occasional contacts with park staff There would be opportunities to learn about the park’s cultural and natural resources	Boat launch sites Boat docks Boat fuel facilities Fishing and scuba diving Houseboating
Semiprimitive	Naturally functioning ecosystem components and processes would be evident in this zone The integrity of natural and cultural resources would be monitored, protected, and preserved	Visitors would have the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate a more natural ecosystem with little discernible human imprint Visitors would find challenge and adventure in this zone Self-reliance would be important There would be some opportunities for solitude There would be a low probability of encountering park staff or other visitors	Resource-based recreational activities such as low-power motorboating, kayaking, canoeing, nature viewing, rafting, and fishing would predominate Self-guided interpretive programs
Primitive	Ecosystem components and processes would be completely naturally functioning in this zone The integrity of natural and cultural resources would be monitored, protected, and preserved	Visitors would have the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate a natural ecosystem with little discernible human imprint Visitors would find a high potential for challenge, risk, and adventure in this zone Self-reliance would be essential There would be numerous opportunities for solitude and a very low probability of encountering park staff or other visitors	Minimal visitor facilities necessary for resource protection and visitor safety would be developed Resource-based recreation activities such as kayaking, canoeing, nature viewing, rafting, and fishing would predominate Self-guided interpretive programs



AMISTAD NATIONAL RECREATION
AREA BOUNDARY

ALTERNATIVE 1
EXISTING CONDITIONS (NO ACTION)
Amistad National Recreation Area Texas
National Park Service U. S. Department of the Interior

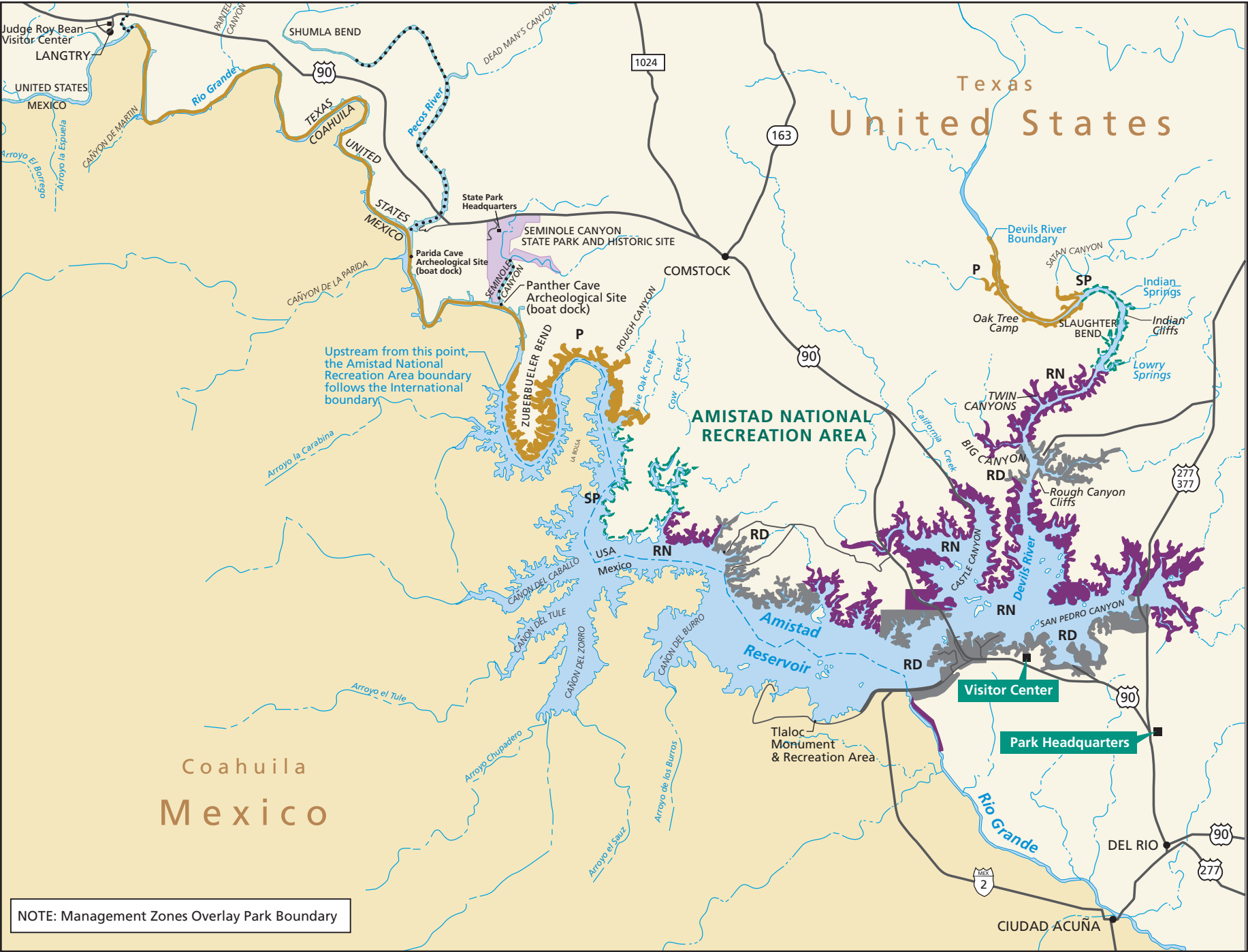
ALTERNATIVE 1
CONTINUATION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS
(NO ACTION)

Under the no-action alternative, Amistad National Recreation Area would continue to manage the park under the 1987 *General Management Plan* and the 1999 *GMP Amendment*. Other planning documents, such as the 2000 *Land Protection Plan* and the 2004 *Environmental Assessment for Personal Watercraft Use*, would provide additional guidance for park management and staff.

Under this alternative, park staff would focus on recreational activities such as fishing, boating, waterskiing, and personal watercraft use. Nonmotorized boating use, such as kayaks and canoes, would occur at levels similar to those experienced currently. Other recreational activities, such as camping, picnicking, and birding would continue. Hunting would continue in the areas currently designated by the park. Facilities development under this alternative would be limited to actions currently underway or proposed by the park. Improvements at the marinas would be limited to modifications of the boat docks to adapt to changing lake water levels.

Park interpretation of archeological sites would occur at those sites currently open to visitor access. Park management would continue to cooperate with Seminole Canyon State Park and Historic Site on cultural resource protection and interpretation.





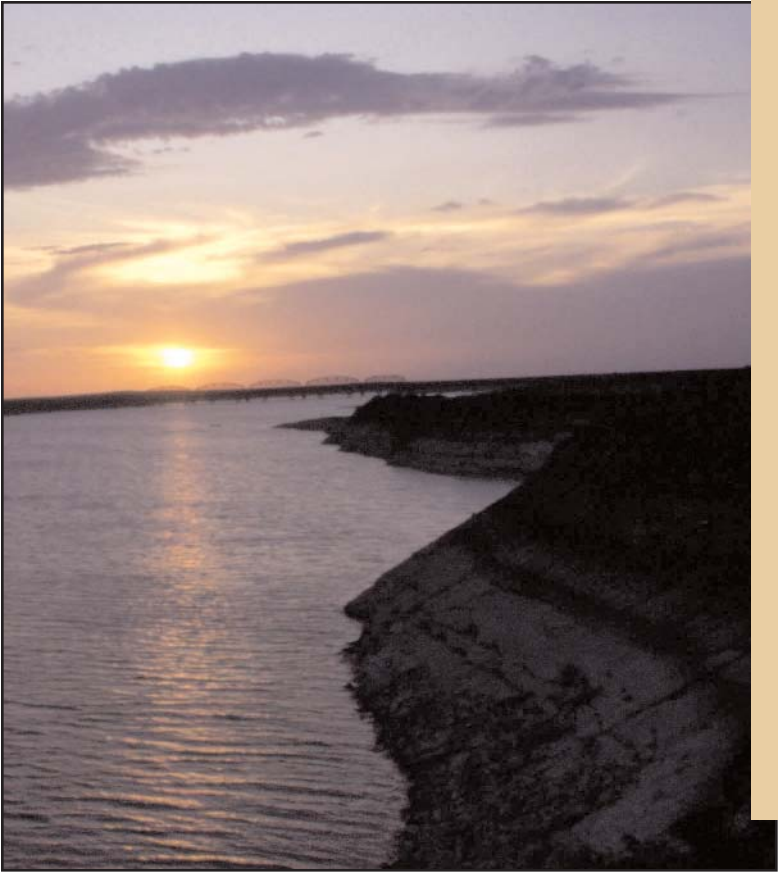
UPLAND MANAGEMENT ZONES

- Lower Pecos Cultural Zone
- Primitive Zone
- Semiprimitive Zone
- Rural Developed Zone
- Rural Natural Zone

LAKE MANAGEMENT ZONES

- P Primitive
- SP Semiprimitive
- RN Rural Natural
- RD Rural Developed

ALTERNATIVE 2
THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE
Amistad National Recreation Area Texas
National Park Service U. S. Department of the Interior



ALTERNATIVE 2
THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Amistad NRA’s distinctive combination of cultural and natural resources and its variety of outstanding water- and land-based recreational opportunities make it a unique recreational and educational opportunity in southwest Texas. Amistad NRA is a resource of which all Americans, and particularly the residents of southwest Texas, can be justly proud. More than a mere recreation area, Amistad NRA has the potential to serve as an outdoor classroom in which all visitors can gain a deeper appreciation for the history, cultures, and natural environment of the Lower Pecos River valley and the Rio Grande borderlands. In order to realize this vision for the future, however, Amistad must successfully address challenges relating to safety and security, resource management, education and interpretation, and cooperation with a number of federal, state, and local agencies and officials, private organizations, park neighbors, and other stakeholders. The park’s general management plan will describe the procedures through which the National Park Service and the management and staff of Amistad NRA will realize the full potential of the area for this and future generations.

The sections below describe how park management will address major issues relating to park and border security, recreational activities, cultural and natural resource protection and management, educational and interpretive programs, and the development of park facilities, including visitor access.

PARK AND BORDER SECURITY

Border Security

NPS management policies require park superintendents to manage law enforcement activities as part of a comprehensive, interdisciplinary effort to protect resources, manage public use, and promote public safety and appropriate enjoyment. The National Park Service is authorized to render cooperative assistance to other law enforcement agencies in support of or to assist those agencies. Cooperation in law enforcement is important in all units of the national park system, but it is critical at Amistad NRA and other border units.

The U.S.-Mexico borderlands historically have been an unsettled region, a condition that persists to this day. Illegal drug smuggling and illegal immigration pose growing challenges for Amistad NRA and other border NPS units. Moreover, since the events of September 11, 2001, the security requirements for our borders place additional burdens on the park's rangers and other staff. In addition to protecting resources and ensuring visitor safety within the park's boundaries, NPS rangers and management at Amistad NRA must be prepared to cooperate with the various agencies of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to support and assist those agencies in ensuring the security of the United States.

Homeland Security

The Department of Homeland Security was created to provide the unifying core for the vast national networks of organizations and institutions involved in efforts to secure our nation. Securing our borders is a critical component of this effort. As the boundaries of Amistad NRA include 83 miles of the United States' 1,989-mile border with the Republic of Mexico, border security is a real concern of the park's management and staff. The primary contact for Amistad NRA within the Department of Homeland Security is the Division of Border and Transportation Security. This division brings the nation's major border security and transportation operations under one roof. The management and park staff of Amistad NRA would cooperate with several bureaus in this division, particularly the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP), which includes the U.S. Customs Service, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (U.S. Border Patrol), the Federal Protective Service, and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center.

The ranger division, other park staff, and park management would cooperate with the appropriate DHS bureaus as required to assist those bureaus in fulfilling the mission of the DHS and the Division of Border and Transportation Security. The National Park Service would also cooperate with the appropriate state and local agencies, such as Texas Homeland Security, the Texas Department of Public Safety, the Val Verde County Sheriff's Department, and the City of Del Rio Police Department. The National Park Service would conduct cooperative planning with these bureaus and agencies as well as others deemed appropriate to better focus and coordinate the efforts of the National Park Service and these bureaus and agencies in the joint pursuit of national security.

Over the past 12 months, the park's ranger division has grown to 9 full-time law enforcement rangers to better address issues relating to park safety, resource protection, and fulfilling the NPS commitment to enhancing border security. The park would continue to strengthen its ranger division as necessary to ensure visitor safety, protect resources, and cooperate in securing our nation's borders. Park administrative facilities would be improved as necessary to enhance the ability of the park staff, including the ranger division, to fulfill the NPS mission and the park's commitments to support the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security.

Texas Border Strategy

As part of this planning effort, the NPS Intermountain Regional Office (IMR) would spearhead the development of a coordinated border management and security strategy for all NPS units on the U.S.-Mexico border. In addition to Amistad NRA, these include Big Bend National Park, Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River, Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site, Chamizal National Memorial, and Padre Island National Seashore. The park would coordinate with the IMR office in developing this multipark strategy. The National Park Service would also work with the DHS to assist the border parks with additional technical assistance in developing this cooperative strategy.

As issues relating to border security are resolved, the NPS Texas border strategy could be broadened to address other issues that are specific to the U.S.-Mexico border region. The Texas Council on Environmental Quality (formerly the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission), monitors environmental issues and enforces environmental law and policy throughout the state of Texas, including the border area where four Mexican states border Texas. Among the issues facing the border region are increasing scarcity of hydrological resources, rapidly growing population growth and urban development, industrialization, immigration, and cross-border trade. A range of environmental impacts relating to hazardous waste, declining air and water quality, and natural resource degradation are felt as a result of these issues. The NPS border strategy eventually could evolve to help the National Park Service coordinate more effectively with the state of

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Amistad National Recreation Area offers the most diverse array of water and land-based recreational opportunities in the American Southwest. Fishing, boating, waterskiing, houseboating, horseback riding, scuba diving, camping, hiking, hunting, and other activities are available to visitors.

- Amistad, which gains more renown each year as one of the outstanding bass fishing reservoirs in Texas, hosts around 300 bass fishing tournaments annually.



- Amistad offers hunting on one of the largest tracts of public land available for hunting in southwest Texas.
- Submerged structures and rock formations enhance the experience for scuba divers.
- Amistad offers some of the best sailing and motorboating on one of the largest reservoirs in Texas.
- Canoeing and kayaking on the reservoir and associated rivers offer some of the best wild river experiences in Texas.

- Hikers enjoy the chaparral desert environment and experience archeological resources.
- Camping is offered on a secluded lakeshore.

Concession Operations

To maximize the recreational potential of Amistad NRA, park management would propose the greater utilization of concession services to provide and/or enhance safe and enjoyable visitor experiences related to the natural and cultural resources at Amistad NRA. Increased use of concession services would enable park staff to focus on visitor safety, resource protection, and the development of expanded interpretation and educational programs.

Park Development

As part of the implementation of this plan, the park would undertake development to improve the park's infrastructure and make the lake and its surrounding lands more accessible for park visitors. These improvements to maximize visitors' appreciation and enjoyment of Amistad NRA would include

1. Improvements to infrastructure
 - Extended boat launch ramps for use during fluctuating lake levels
 - Restrooms

- Improved campgrounds – developed, semiprimitive, and primitive
- Access roads
- Trails for hiking in rural natural, semiprimitive, and primitive zones
- Enlarge existing and develop new parking areas
- Fish-cleaning stations
- New headquarters building and maintenance facility

2. Transportation services for the nonboating public, such as houseboat cruises, access to cultural resource sites, and transport for nonmotorized boaters to the Pecos and Devil's Rivers and the Upper Rio Grande

3. Improved communication and security facilities, such as ranger stations and emergency public telephones

4. Installation of remotely monitored video surveillance to the major boat launching facilities to deter criminal activities and to assist investigation of illegal activities.

Conservation Easements

The National Park Service and the management of Amistad NRA would work with local landowners to secure conservation easements or other cooperative agreements to provide access for nonmotorized boaters on the Pecos and Devil's Rivers and the upper Rio Grande. These agreements with landowners would allow limited shore access for canoeists, kayakers, and rafters on the tributaries.

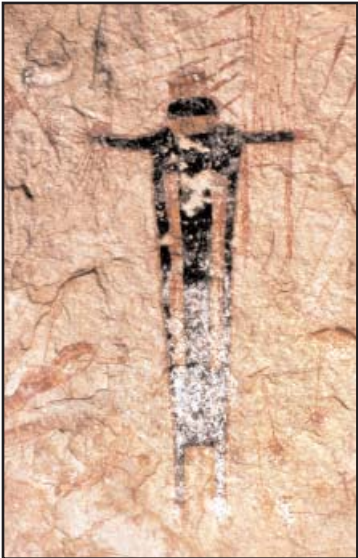
The park would also work with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to develop agreements with the TNC to provide access on TNC-owned lands or lands on which the TNC holds conservation easements. These agreements would be restricted to low-impact recreational activities.



CULTURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Archeology and Rock Art

Amistad NRA and the surrounding region are home to one of the greatest concentrations of rock art and archeological sites in North America. The area's archeological record spans nearly 12,000 years of human history and prehistory. The region's dry climate ensures a high level of integrity of the park's prehistoric material culture. Some elements of this material culture such as preserved fiber materials are uncommon in other parts of North America. Within or immediately adjacent to the park's boundaries there are four National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Archeological Districts, which collectively list 183 sites at the national level of significance.



In addition, within the park's boundaries are some of North America's oldest, largest, and best-preserved rock art sites. Four major prehistoric styles and one historic period pictograph style are represented in the region. Pecos River, the oldest style, has been dated as far back as 3,500-4,500 years before present. With more than 325 known rock art sites within a roughly 50-square-mile area, the Lower Pecos River valley area has one of the densest concentrations of archaic rock art in the New World. The park manages and protects over 700 sites.

The protection and management of these resources is a critical element of the park's legislative mandate. Protection of these resources means that their integrity is maintained for future generations. Their protection depends upon ensuring that today's visitors understand and appreciate the sensitive nature of these resources and are enlisted as partners in the preservation of these resources. In cooperation with visitors, area schools, community groups, other government and private organizations, and the general public, Amistad NRA can succeed in instilling and promoting a conservation ethic that would guarantee that these vivid reminders of the history of the Lower Rio Grande valley are carried forward unimpaired into the future.

The park would work cooperatively with Seminole Canyon State Park and Historic Site in the development of expanded interpretive and educational programs. Under a cooperative agreement the state of Texas would provide the facility for the expanded programs and the park would provide technical assistance in interpretive planning and exhibit design. Working together, the state and the park would provide expanded educational services to better

inform visitors about the region's rich history and culture. The transportation study for Amistad NRA would identify potential improvements to enhance access to cultural resources in the park (see "Park Operations and Facilities").

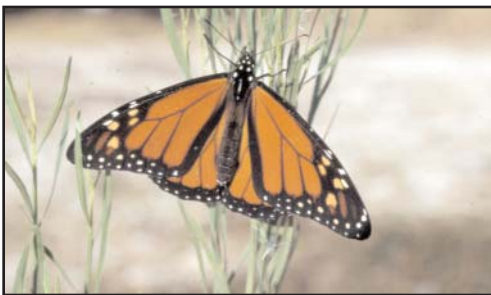
A large number of significant archeological and other cultural resources within the boundaries of Amistad NRA are not owned by the National Park Service. The park would also work with the Rock Art Foundation, the Shumla School, and with owners of private property within the boundaries of the park to develop appropriate protection strategies for the significant resources that are outside the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. In those cases where landowners would be willing to allow public access to their resources, the park would work to develop cooperative agreements and/or acquire conservation easements to provide for resource protection and adequate compensation for participating landowners. The National Park Service would seek to acquire lands with significant resources only in those cases where there is a willing seller per the park's *Land Protection Plan*.



Park Museum Collections

Amistad NRA is home to the third-largest museum collection in the national park system. The park's collection include artifacts from more than 200 sites and 22 major excavations. It is estimated the collection contains over 1 million artifacts and objects. These artifacts are invaluable storytelling tools for informing school groups, researchers, and other visitors of the long and diverse cultural history of the Lower Pecos and Rio Grande valleys. The park would work to expand exhibit programs that would enable greater visitor enjoyment and appreciation of the park's collection.

NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT



The lands of Amistad NRA occupy a transitional zone between three major biotic provinces: the Chihuahuan desert to the west, the Balconian to the northeast, and the Tamaulipan scrub to the southeast. This zone of convergence covers an area of roughly 2,500 square miles and is centered roughly on what once was the confluence of the Pecos and Rio Grande Rivers.

The construction of the Amistad Dam and the creation of Lake Amistad fundamentally altered this part of the Rio Grande landscape while over time creating a new and different environment. The staff of Amistad NRA is charged with managing the use of the new environment while preserving the remaining elements of the old.

Amistad is home to a wide variety of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, insects and other invertebrates, and plants. Among these are game fish such as white bass, striped bass, and large-mouth bass that have earned Amistad NRA its reputation as a premier sportfishing destination. Some of the animals found in the park are non-native species that pose a significant challenge for park management. Exotic species can consume scarce resources, push out native species, and ultimately substantially alter the environment. Among the exotic animal and plant species found at Amistad NRA are

- numerous fish species, including the game fish listed above
- moufflon and auodad sheep
- nutria, a large South American aquatic rodent
- tamarisk, an exotic riparian plant
- hydrilla and other invasive aquatic plants



Several of these exotic species, like nutria and hydrilla, are limited to areas near the reservoir. However, moufflon and auodad sheep and tamarisk impact a far larger area. The spread of tamarisk in particular represents an increasingly critical regional environmental crisis. This noxious plant species is spreading rapidly in riparian areas throughout the West and is encroaching in the Pecos, Devils, and Rio Grande watersheds. The National Park Service and management of Amistad NRA would work cooperatively with Texas State Parks and Wildlife, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, The Nature Conservancy, and private landowners on the development and implementation of a comprehensive program of tamarisk eradication in the Pecos, Devils, and Rio Grande valleys. Cooperative planning would also be essential in developing strategies to effectively manage other exotic species.

Several threatened, endangered, or species of concern have been confirmed either within or near the vicinity of the reservoir. These include the interior least tern, black tern, snowy plover, hooded oriole, olive sparrow, white-faced ibis, Devils River minnow, the Texas horned lizard, and the cave myotis (a species of bat). The National Park Service and Amistad NRA management would work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and Texas Parks and Wildlife to develop strategies to protect critical habitat for threatened, endangered, and species of concern, and to manage recreation to ensure sustainability of these species.

VISITOR EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

Visitor education and interpretive programs are the tools the park would use to realize fully Amistad NRA's potential as an outdoor classroom in which visitors could gain a deeper appreciation for the history, cultures, and natural environment of the Lower Pecos River valley and the Rio Grande borderlands. A number of existing NPS programs would be used to create for park visitors of all ages and backgrounds meaningful experiences to enhance their visit to Amistad NRA. Interpretive and educational programs would be integrated in the park's wide variety of recreational activities.

Connecting People to Parks

"Connecting People to Parks" is the theme of the National Park Service Interpretation and Education Division. By connecting people to parks, educational and interpretive programs would create memorable visitor experiences, preserve our diverse heritage, and promote resource stewardship. These programs are the media the park would use to tell visitors about the remarkable combination of resources and experiences that make Amistad NRA one of the special places in southwest Texas. These programs would communicate the need to preserve the park and the important role that visitors, park neighbors, and local residents could play in helping protect the park for future generations to enjoy. The National Park Service has developed a number of programs that could be implemented to increase public awareness of and support for Amistad NRA.

Parks as Classrooms

The Parks as Classrooms program is a curriculum-based education program of the National Park Service. It is specifically designed to help teachers meet their curriculum needs through the resources found at national park sites. Based on the idea that parks represent the real thing in the right place, Parks as Classrooms uses the natural, cultural, and historical resources of parks to offer free or at-cost opportunities to supplement classroom instruction. Programs are offered by national park sites, in collaboration with local school districts and community organizations. Programs are interdisciplinary and emphasize experiential teaching and learning techniques.



The resource and interpretive staff of Amistad NRA would work with schools in the Del Rio community, Val Verde County, and Seminole Canyon State Park and Historic Site to design curricula and programs focused on illustrating the variety of resources and the distinct ecosystem at Amistad NRA. The National Park Service Education Council report, "Renewing Our Education Mission," would provide the overall framework for the educational programs at the park. Students visiting the park would enjoy a range of experiences to supplement their regular curricula.

Cooperative Efforts

The National Park Service would cooperate with Texas State Parks and Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, The Rock Art Foundation, and other federal, state, and local agencies and organizations in the development of education programs to ensure that these programs reflected a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach to learning.

Cooperating Associations

Cooperating associations are one of the oldest and most enduring partnerships of the National Park Service. Since 1920, these associations have provided for park visitors inexpensive, quality guides, maps, and other interpretive material and literature not otherwise available through the use of federal funds. Wide-ranging partnerships of interested individuals, educational institutions, and preservation societies have joined with park naturalists, historians, and interpreters to produce and make available such information.



Park management would work closely with the Big Bend National History Association to enhance the park's ability to provide visitors and the members of the local community with information about the park, develop effective educational materials, and tie Amistad NRA closer to Del Rio and the surrounding region.

Volunteers-in-Parks (VIP)

The VIP program has grown significantly since its inception in 1970. Today, nearly 120,000 volunteers help to preserve and protect our nation's natural and cultural resources. The program is an invaluable tool for bringing many people of different ages, backgrounds, skills, and talents to devote their time and energy to enriching our national parks.

The park would work closely with its VIPs to maximize their contributions to the park and expand the program to build a close relationship between the park, the people who use it, and the local community.



Junior Ranger Program

The Junior Ranger program is designed to introduce young people from the ages of 7-11 to the national parks. Involving children from Del Rio and the surrounding community in the Junior Ranger program is another way of engaging them in activities at Amistad and raising community awareness of this important resource. Their participation at Amistad NRA today would continue to ensure a quality experience at the park in the future.

PARK OPERATIONS AND FACILITIES

Additions and improvements to Amistad NRA's existing infrastructure would be necessary to enhance park security, meet the NPS commitments to homeland security, provide for better resource protection, and expand visitor education and interpretation.

The park's administrative facilities and visitor center currently are inadequate to meet staff, management, and visitor needs. A new headquarters building and maintenance facility would be developed. This new facility would enhance park efficiency and effectiveness, allowing park staff to provide an increased level of services for visitors.

As part of the general management planning process, the park will conduct an alternative transportation study to identify areas in which park access and transportation can be improved to allow greater visitor enjoyment of the lake and uplands.

See park development under "Recreational Activities" for more information on proposed improvements to the park's infrastructure.





**AMISTAD NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
General Management Plan
Response to Newsletter #2**

How to use this form

Please use this form to share your views on the draft management alternatives for Amistad National Recreation Area. Feel free to attach additional sheets if necessary. Fold the form on the line, tape closed (no staples), and mail (no postage necessary). Please send your comments by August 15, 2004.

1. Do you think the alternatives adequately address the issues and opportunities at Amistad NRA? Are there things we have overlooked?

2. Are there modifications to the alternatives that you would prefer to make?

3. Which alternative do you prefer? Do you have a preferred alternative that you would like to describe?

4. Are there any other comments or concerns that you would like to convey to the planning team?

**OR RESPOND ONLINE AT:
Amistad_planning@nps.gov**

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Amistad National Recreation Area
General Management Plan
Newsletter #2, June 2004

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PLANNING MILESTONES

Project Goal	Status
Initiate project identify project scope, issues, and desired future conditions for Amistad NRA	Complete
Establish planning foundation and context confirm Amistad NRAs purpose and significance, gather and analyze data, solicit public input on the vision for the future of the park	Planning context, purpose and significance complete Data analysis and solicitation of public input ongoing
Develop and evaluate alternatives define future management vision for the park	We are here
Prepare a Draft GMP/EIS	December 2004
Publish Final GMP/EIS	September 2005
Implement approved plan	November 2005